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Annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination for 2005/06

Summary

The present report provides an overview of major developments in inter-agency cooperation within the framework of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), during the period covering its fall 2005 and spring 2006 sessions.

During that period, the preparations for the 2005 World Summit and the follow-up to its Outcome provided the main focus for the work of the Board, and that of its High-level Committees. Their contribution to the preparatory process culminated in the publication *One United Nations: Catalyst for Progress and Change — How the Millennium Declaration is Changing the Way the United Nations System Works*, which, in reviewing progress in implementing the Millennium Declaration, also charts the way forward for the United Nations system.

CEB, through the High-level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) and the High-level Committee on Management (HLCM), also addressed the cross-cutting issues of gender mainstreaming and knowledge management. In the programme area, priority issues for inter-agency attention included employment, migration and the system's support to the New Partnership for Africa's Development, as well as follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society. In the area of management and administration, efforts focused on ensuring the safety and security of United Nations system personnel, promoting transparency and accountability as principles of good governance, better employing information and communications technologies in management and operations, enhancing the financial and human resources management and coordinating the United Nations system response to the threat of the avian influenza.

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The commitment to *One United Nations* set the tone of CEB's determination to work closely with the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence to advance the effectiveness and impact of the system's response to the complex challenges facing the international community today.

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I. Introduction

1. The United Nations system is unique in the range and coverage of its structures and mandates and in the diversity of the means of action that are at its disposal. These characteristics can be a unique source of strength in addressing the increasingly complex and interrelated challenges that the international community is facing. Fully exploiting and harnessing this potential — ensuring that the wide-ranging capacities of the system are brought to bear in a coherent and, at the same time, creative and flexible way in meeting the evolving requirements of Member States and the international community — continues to be the main underlying objective guiding the work of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB). Political will to make full and effective use of the system, and the presence of an internationally agreed framework to provide common policy orientation to all parts of the system, are key conditions for progress in this respect. The advances that the Millennium Summit brought about in this regard, building on the conferences of the 1990s, have been unparalleled. By reaffirming confidence in the system and providing a common policy instrument around which all parts of the system could rally, an unprecedented unity of purpose was generated within the system, as well as an unprecedented common drive to identify and address the rigidities and other problems within and among organizations that stand in the way of maximizing the system's overall relevance and impact.

2. Against this background, the preparations for the 2005 World Summit and the follow-up to its Outcome (General Assembly resolution 60/1) provided the main focus for the work of CEB, and that of its High-level Committees, during the period under review. CEB's contribution to the preparatory process culminated in the publication of *One United Nations: Catalyst for Progress and Change — How the Millennium Declaration is Changing the Way the United Nations System Works*, which was launched at the July 2005 session of the Economic and Social Council and was commended by the President of the Economic and Social Council to the Summit. The publication evolved as a product of the United Nations system assessment of its role in supporting the implementation of the goals of the Millennium Declaration. It was intended to demonstrate how the common endeavour engendered by the Declaration has been serving to broaden the perspectives of all organizations of the United Nations system and helping them, both individually and collectively, to deepen analysis, expand knowledge-sharing, reinforce synergies and sharpen the focus on results. And it sought to underscore the system's readiness to be held collectively accountable for its efforts in this regard.

3. *One United Nations* concludes with a number of commitments, chief among them: achieving a more inclusive, purposeful mobilization of its resources and capacities; engendering the active participation of all organizations in shaping policies and seeing to their implementation; working towards a deeper engagement of civil society in policy development and implementation; ensuring that within and across organizations the conceptual and standard-setting work of the system and its operational activities proceed in a mutually reinforcing manner; and achieving a much more unified system presence at the country level. The capacity to combine analytical and normative functions with operational mandates amounts to a unique comparative advantage of the United Nations system, which has so far been vastly underexploited. A more integrated approach to the system's policy development and operational functions would help to further harmonize its mission to advance agreed

goals at all levels, while strengthening its adherence to the basic principle of country ownership of development assistance. These commitments are among those which are now guiding the system in its follow-up to the 2005 World Summit Outcome, which is the focus of section II of the present report, and which tie in closely with the ongoing work of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment, also referred to in that section. In the same perspective, section II refers to the role of the United Nations System Staff College as a means to promote a system-wide learning culture rooted in shared values and common objectives for all staff of the United Nations system.

4. Section III of the present report deals with the system's follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society. Other elements of the system's agenda for further progress, as outlined in *One United Nations*, focus on common, more reliable and more accessible, user-friendly statistical and other data and, as reported in section IV of the present report, on a common strategy for better employing information and communications technologies (ICT) in management and operations.

5. Section IV details the efforts of the United Nations system to strengthen collaboration in the area of management and administration. Since it promotes transparency and accountability as principles of good governance at the national and local levels, the United Nations system must internalize and apply these principles at all levels.

II. Follow-up to the 2005 World Summit Outcome

6. At its fall 2005 session, immediately following the 2005 World Summit, CEB focused its discussion on the implications of, and follow-up to the 2005 World Summit Outcome. The Secretary-General stressed that the Summit Outcome should be seen as a call to action — for Member States, civil society and other stakeholders, and the United Nations system as a whole. Its implications for the United Nations system were clear: the system had been challenged to be more effective and efficient across the breadth of its agenda and to demonstrate greater coherence. The bar had been set high.

7. CEB members stressed the relevance of the Summit Outcome for the work of their organizations and outlined the steps they were taking to contribute to its follow-up. They noted with satisfaction that the Summit Outcome not only reaffirmed the goals and commitments in the Millennium Declaration and the internationally agreed development goals emanating from the United Nations summits and conferences, but also contained new important guidelines that were at the centre of the work of many organizations of the system. These related, in the development field, to: rural and agricultural development; productive employment and decent work; science and technology, including information and communications technology and early warning systems for natural hazards; reproductive health; slum prevention and slum upgrading; investments; and migration and development. High significance was also attached by CEB members to the strong reaffirmation by Member States of their commitment to achieving the objectives of "Education for all", programmes, achieving gender equality and empowerment of women, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, and ensuring environmental sustainability.

8. The renewed emphasis that the Summit Outcome places on eradicating poverty and promoting sustained economic growth and sustainable development, particularly the strong reaffirmation of the commitment to the global development partnership agreed in Monterrey, the crucial importance of a successful conclusion of the Doha round and the advances made on debt relief and aid were strongly welcomed by CEB members. As part of these discussions, CEB adopted a statement on the multilateral round of negotiations under the Doha Development Agenda and the sixth World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference, held in Hong Kong, China, from 13 to 18 December 2005, which is reproduced in the annex of the present report.

9. The new opportunities presented by the Summit's advances on aid and debt to step up system efforts in support of developing countries were highlighted. Special emphasis was placed on the need for coherent system-wide support for the Summit Outcome provisions relating to the elaboration of comprehensive national development strategies to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and for the new mandate assigned to the Economic and Social Council as the principal United Nations body for assessing and monitoring progress in the implementation of these goals.

10. On the environment, the need was underlined to integrate the key issues — climate change, natural disasters, energy, freshwater, water and sanitation, production and consumption patterns, chemicals and hazardous wastes, oceans and seas, and coastal zone management — within a development framework and to ensure a coordinated response by the system. With a view to helping maximize the contribution of tourism to sustainable development, CEB launched, at its spring 2006 session, the United Nations Tourism Exchange Network, to be steered by the United Nations World Tourism Organization.

A. System-wide coherence

The High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment

11. The Summit invited the Secretary-General to develop proposals for "more tightly managed entities in the field of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment" (General Assembly resolution 60/1). Accordingly, in February 2006, the Secretary-General set up the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment to undertake a study on United Nations system-wide coherence, with the participation of the Chairs of HLCP and the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) in an ex officio capacity.

12. The CEB retreat held in conjunction with its first regular session of 2006 was dedicated to a dialogue between Executive Heads and members of the Panel. The two High-level Committees of CEB — HLCP and HLCM — met jointly in February to contribute to preparing CEB interaction with the Panel. The discussions covered: (a) United Nations system funding issues and international aid architecture; (b) coordination for development impact, including the resident coordinator system and the linking of humanitarian, development and environmental activities; (c) reforming support services in support of development; (d) coherence between

normative, analytical, policy work and operations; and (c) developing new United Nations system management culture(s).

13. The dialogue with the Panel at the CEB retreat, held on 7 and 8 April 2006, followed the Panel's own first meeting, held from 4 to 6 April. The consultations between the Panel members and the Executive Heads of the organizations of the system focused on three key issues: (a) financing of United Nations development activities; (b) coherence and effectiveness of the United Nations system, including coherence between normative, analytical, policy work and operations and coordination for impact at the field level; and (c) governance of the United Nations system.

14. CEB members welcomed the open, forthcoming and committed way in which the Panel is approaching its work. They outlined for the representatives of the Panel the way in which United Nations system organizations, individually as well as collectively, are endeavouring to adapt their responses to the changing requirements of Member States. They undertook to fully support the effort spearheaded by the Panel to bring about the change that is required to ensure that the potential of the system is fully exploited and its capacity to bring about lasting progress is significantly strengthened. They pointed out that the credibility of the system is not only affected by its capacity to respond to emergency situations in an effective and timely way. It depends equally on its capacity to address the root causes of problems. This in turn requires not only convergence of actions between all parts of the system, including multilateral and bilateral actors, but also access to resources commensurate to the magnitude of the problems that the international community expects the system to tackle. Financing modalities are also an important part of the coherence problematique to be addressed by the Panel: current trends away from core funding and privileging special purpose funding are important factors behind the competition for resources in which United Nations system organizations are being forced to engage, leading to strains in the coordination effort and, at times, shifts away from core mandates towards areas where more funding happens to be available. Greater clarity and focus in the role and contribution of each organization is an important part of the greater system-wide coherence being sought, but that cannot be fully achieved unless all elements of funding architecture are at the same time effectively addressed.

15. Executive Heads also stressed that, in addition to funding issues, and beyond management and delivery systems, the overall issue of policy coherence will also need to be squarely addressed by the Panel, if greater system-wide coherence is to have a significant impact on the system's capacity to effect real progress and change. Both the contribution of different parts of the system — the United Nations, the sectoral agencies, the World Bank and regional institutions — and the respective roles of organizations and Members States in advancing policy coherence will need to be analysed in this regard. In the same context, rather than artificial separations between normative/analytical work and operational activities, ways of bringing about stronger and more organic links between these two aspects of the system's contribution to development should be a main objective of the Panel's work. Enabling agencies, as knowledge organizations, to transfer their knowledge to countries should be an important dimension of the drive towards greater system-wide coherence. At the country level, coherence should be measured by the extent to which "ownership" is effectively advanced: the system's sense of "ownership" of the resident coordinator system and, even more important, the extent

to which all coordination instruments are geared to advance the country's "ownership" of the system's support.

16. The consultations between the Panel and CEB are taking place at a time of great change, in which new forms of international cooperation are emerging and new international institutional arrangements are being introduced in the effort to eradicate poverty, protect people from disasters and safeguard the Earth, on which all life depends. A more coherent United Nations system, which is better able to marshal its significant human and financial resources, global networks and other assets and comparative advantages, is necessary to meet the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and to support Member States in meeting both present and future global challenges. All members of CEB pledged their full support to the Panel in reaching conclusions that will effectively advance the effectiveness and coherence of the system in all its aspects. The organizations of the system intend to pursue their dialogue with the High-level Panel in an open and constructive spirit.

Increasing the effectiveness and coherence of United Nations system activities at the country level

17. In the Summit Outcome, Member States reaffirmed their commitment to the global partnership for development set out in the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. They further stressed that each country must take primary responsibility for its own development, and that the role of national policies and development strategies is critical in the achievement of sustainable development. Such national efforts should be complemented by supportive global programmes, measures and policies. Member States resolved to ensure that the United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies support the efforts of developing countries through the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework process, enhancing their support for capacity-building.

18. In its resolution on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (General Assembly resolution 59/250), the General Assembly placed, among the key priorities of United Nations reform, the increased effectiveness and coherence of United Nations system activities at the country level. It called on CEB to play a specific role in a number of areas, including capacity-building and evaluation.

19. A wide-ranging analysis of the capacity development efforts of the United Nations system is currently being pursued through a task force of HLCP and is being organized so as to maximize the use of the experience accumulated in this domain by each organization of the system. As regards evaluation, drawing on the valuable collaborative initiatives being pursued by the United Nations Evaluation Group, a policy statement is being developed which is intended to provide broad, common guidance to all concerned member organizations of CEB in supporting the evaluation function and to further encourage system-wide collaboration on evaluation.

20. Complementing the work of HLCP, a working group on non-resident agencies has been established by UNDG to address the request in resolution 59/250 for measures to ensure that all United Nations system agencies, including those with no or limited country presence, bring their expertise and accumulated analytical and

normative experience to bear at the country level. The results of the work of this group will be followed up in both HLCP and UNDG, within their respective mandates, and will provide a useful bridge for intensifying collaboration between them.

B. Cross-cutting issues

Promoting gender mainstreaming

21. At the 2005 World Summit, Member States resolved to take measures to promote gender equality, eliminate pervasive gender discrimination and promote the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres. As part of this commitment, the World Summit called on the Secretary-General and all decision-making bodies to take further steps in mainstreaming a gender perspective in United Nations policies and decisions. Against this background, and acknowledging the major gaps that remain within the system between policy and practice, HLCP has decided to accord high priority in its work programme to gender issues.

22. To guide this work, the Secretary-General has asked HLCP and HLCM, in cooperation with his Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, to focus on the development of a system-wide gender mainstreaming policy and strategy. The Secretary-General has also sought a more active engagement by the system in the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security.

23. The two Committees subsequently considered the elements for such a policy and strategy at their February meetings, and CEB itself addressed the matter at its first regular session in 2006. CEB members expressed serious concern over the lack of sufficient progress in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Board asked that the process of elaborating a comprehensive system-wide gender mainstreaming policy and strategy be accelerated, and that the additional actions, including specific timelines and benchmarks, that are required to effectively implement the strategy be given due priority at both the organizational and inter-agency levels. In the same context, it committed itself to addressing ways of ensuring that adequate resources, both financial and human, are deployed by the organizations of the system, to achieve concrete progress in this crucial area. CEB decided to revert to the matter and to consider specific proposals in this regard at its fall 2006 session.

Fostering inter-agency collaboration in knowledge management and knowledge-sharing

24. In the past year, both HLCM and HLCP have reiterated their commitment to pursue a common strategy to more effectively share knowledge across the system. While extensive capacity to leverage knowledge resources already exists within many United Nations system organizations, the ability of the system as a whole to share knowledge is a critical condition to significantly advance overall policy and programmatic coherence. With these considerations in mind, CEB, through its High-level Committees, has established an inter-agency task force to shape a system-wide knowledge-sharing strategy. Underlying the elaboration of this strategy is the

recognition of United Nations agencies as centres of excellence in their respective areas of specialization, and the importance of finding ways for their individual strengths to coalesce to promote multisectoral approaches that can advance both security and development.

25. Successful knowledge-sharing can occur only in an open environment, where all participants feel free to contribute and share what they know, and where their input is not only welcome, but also expected. Barriers to efficient knowledge-sharing frequently stem from prevailing institutional cultures, and lack of adequate support mechanisms. The task force on knowledge-sharing is working to address these cultural and infrastructure obstacles by exploring ways of advancing a broader culture of knowledge-sharing across institutional boundaries, and of strengthening institutional policies that guide participation in knowledge networks.

United Nations System Staff College

26. The presence of a common vision is a primary condition for achieving coherence and is critical to the system's progress in advancing common goals in the development area, including its linkages to peace and security. The United Nations System Staff College is an integral part of the effort to develop such a vision and of rooting it in a shared understanding of, and common approaches to, programmatic and management practices across the system.

27. At their February meetings, HLCP and HLCM considered proposals for prioritizing the curriculum of the Staff College, emphasizing "life cycle" training for United Nations system staff members. In addition to focusing on management issues, the proposals address the feasibility of pilot programmes on some of the key themes covered by the Millennium Summit Declaration.

28. The two High-level Committees concurred in principle with the approaches underlying the proposals, subject to the development of a business plan to be reviewed by the Staff College Board of Governors. It was noted that the role of the Staff College in creating a common system-wide culture has acquired new and greater relevance in current circumstances, but has not, as yet, been sufficiently exploited. Common senior management training could prove a particularly valuable vehicle also for gender mainstreaming.

C. Themes

Inter-agency collaboration against hunger

29. At its forty-fifth session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination invited CEB to continue to monitor the effective coordination of system-wide efforts against hunger and poverty and recommended that CEB include in its next annual overview report information on progress being achieved and problems being encountered by the relevant inter-agency mechanisms.

30. In addition to the three Rome-based agencies (the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Food Programme, the International Fund for Agricultural Development), a number of other organizations of the system (among them, the World Bank, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Health Organization) are engaged in efforts that combine immediate assistance for the poor and the hungry with long-term development programmes that aim at

boosting productivity, creating employment and increasing the value of people's assets with the objective of halving world hunger by 2015. This work includes:

(a) The elaboration of a strategy to address hunger, agriculture and rural development as part of an action plan on the Millennium Declaration, the Millennium Development Goals and other international development goals for the period 2006-2008;

(b) Beginning work on the "Ending child hunger and undernutrition initiative", aimed at creating a global alliance of national authorities and all other concerned actors to mobilize the intellectual, political, financial and operational resources required to address and end child hunger;

(c) Advocacy within the framework of the International Alliance Against Hunger, established in 2003 by the World Food Summit: five years later, to promote greater political will and practical action to rapidly reduce the incidence of hunger and rural poverty;

(d) The establishment or strengthening of collaborative programmes to support African countries under the aegis of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

31. At the same time, work is continuing to secure broad inter-agency cooperation to address interrelated issues of hunger, malnutrition and poverty eradication, with the United Nations system Standing Committee on Nutrition serving as the focal point for promoting harmonized nutrition policies and strategies throughout the United Nations system. In June 2005, the Standing Committee held, under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, a special meeting on the critical role of nutrition for reaching the Millennium Development Goals, in preparation for the September 2005 World Summit.

32. The Standing Committee has also developed a strategic framework and action plan to help countries address the double burden of malnutrition.[1] The plan aims at accelerating achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and curbing the rise in nutrition-related chronic diseases. The action plan sets objectives, goals and targets to be reached over the next five years, and lays out the actions needed to achieve them.

33. Another important United Nations system instrument for addressing the issue of hunger is the Network on Rural Development and Food Security, which promotes the exchange of information and fosters joint inter-agency activities related to rural development and food security at the international level. Its forty national thematic groups have proved to be effective coordination mechanisms in support of United Nations agencies country-level activities. They have also allowed for sharing experiences, exchanging creative approaches and identifying best practices. In several cases, the thematic groups have become the natural interface between the United Nations system, Governments' planning machinery and other stakeholders in the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society. The Network also provides strong support to the implementation of the International Alliance Against Hunger. Budget limitations constrain the further development of activities of the Network at the national level.

[1] While undernutrition kills early in life, it also leads to high risk of disease and death later in life. This is the double burden of malnutrition.

34. The international response to reducing undernutrition has generally been insufficient. For the most part, the response has been confined within narrow disciplines and sectoral boundaries. The main difficulties encountered by the organizations of the system in addressing the issue of malnutrition and hunger include:

(a) A decline of over 50 per cent in the share of agricultural official development assistance during the last decade: inadequate financial resources to address structural issues in the agricultural sector remain a principal impediment;

(b) The limited knowledge and understanding that continues to prevail of the actual and potential roles, relationships and complementarities of the relevant United Nations agencies; the many ministries involved within national Governments; and the multitude of non-governmental organizations engaged in addressing malnutrition;

(c) Lack of clarity around food and nutrition indicators. The terms hunger and malnutrition are not always used with the same meaning by different nutrition professionals, let alone other non-specialized actors. Consequently, the key messages are inconsistent or lack consistency;

(d) The notion that the proactive solution of hunger and malnutrition can be a platform for accelerating development is not sufficiently shared by all the relevant development actors.

Employment

35. Acknowledging the critical importance of productive employment and decent work in lifting people out of poverty, HLCP, in July 2005, selected employment as one of the priority issues on the inter-agency agenda. This decision was reinforced by the 2005 World Summit Outcome, which identified the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all, including for women and young people, as a central objective of relevant national and international policies and national development strategies in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

36. HLCP, at its February 2006 session, welcomed the active contribution of the system to the forthcoming high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council to be held in July on the item "Creating an environment at the national and international levels conducive to generating full and productive employment and decent work for all, and its impact on sustainable development". It noted that ensuring productive employment is both an end in itself and a means by which other key development objectives would be reached.

37. The Committee acknowledged that employment cuts across the programmatic and sectoral interventions of most of the organizations of the system. In that light, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has been requested to consult with other organizations of the system on how they view the issue of employment in the context of their own work and on ways of strengthening common orientations to the system's actions in support of national efforts towards full and productive employment. CEB will revert to this issue at its fall 2006 session in the light of the outcome of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council and options to be presented by ILO on approaches to enhance the capacity of the system to support countries in adopting effective employment generation strategies.

Migration

38. With its cross-cutting political, economic and social impacts, the increasing international movement of people touches upon the mandates of many of the United Nations system's specialized agencies, programmes and funds. Organizations carry out a wide variety of activities that contribute to improving the outcomes of international migration and to assist Governments in addressing international migration issues. The United Nations system plays a particularly important role in setting norms and standards for the treatment of international migrants, but has as yet to comprehensively support the growing needs of countries of origin.

39. The decision of HLCP to identify migration as one of the priority issues of its work programme was given added impetus by the Summit Outcome, in which Member States acknowledged "the important nexus between international migration and development and the need to deal with the challenges and opportunities that migration presents to countries of origin, destination and transit" (see resolution 60/1, para. 61). The report of the Global Commission on International Migration, *Migration in an interconnected world: new directions for action*, issued in October 2005, called, inter alia, for the strengthening of inter-agency cooperation arrangements to ensure a more coherent and effective institutional response to the opportunities and challenges presented by international migration.

40. At its first session in 2005, HLCP stressed the importance of improving the coherence of the policies and programmes of the system relating to migration with the system's overall economic and social policies and activities, and of better managing the knowledge base required to enable the system to further substantive progress across the many dimensions of migration.

41. The Committee invited a group of its members to undertake, under the leadership of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and ILO, the collection and consolidation of information across the system to obtain an overall view of migration-related work. The exercise will be coordinated with the newly created Global Migration Group (ILO, the International Organization for Migration, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Bank), and with the activities under way in preparing the Report of the Secretary-General to the High-level Dialogue of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session. HLCP and CEB will revert to the issue at their fall sessions in the light of the outcome of the High-level Dialogue.

42. The organizations of the United Nations system have continued to accord high priority to supporting NEPAD. Such support extends from advocacy efforts, funding and normative work, to the provision of technical assistance. It is primarily directed at the seven thematic clusters (infrastructure development; governance, peace and security; agriculture, trade and market access; environment, population and urbanization; human resources development, employment and HIV/AIDS; science and technology; and communication, advocacy and outreach), which have evolved as the main instruments for consolidating United Nations system support for Africa's development. Details of relevant United Nations system activities are

reflected in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "United Nations system support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development" (E/AC.51/2006/6).

43. The United Nations system's advocacy for substantially increased resource flows for African development is being accompanied by a major concerted effort to help build and strengthen national and regional institutions and managerial and technical capacities in the continent. Executive Heads have repeatedly underscored in CEB that the system's effort in support of NEPAD should be sustained and proactive, while remaining sensitive to Africa's ownership of the programme. Further programme development by the system in support of Africa will be guided by, and draw on, the resolve expressed in the Summit Outcome to strengthen cooperation with NEPAD by providing coherent support for the programmes drawn up by African leaders, including by mobilizing internal and external financial resources and facilitating approval of such programmes.

III. Coordinating follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society

44. The concluding phase of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)-led World Summit on the Information Society took place in Tunis in November 2005. A main objective of the process was to chart future directions in areas critical to bridging the digital divide. The outcomes of the Tunis phase, along with the earlier phase in Geneva in 2003, present a vision of an inclusive information society, which would harness information and ICTs to empower individuals, communities and nations to achieve their full potential. The Summit demonstrated that these technologies can be powerful tools for increasing access to health and education, enhancing productivity, generating economic growth, fostering job creation and employability, and strengthening environmental sustainability, thus reducing poverty and improving the quality of life of all. The United Nations system was assigned a central place in the broad multi-stakeholder effort of bringing the benefits of the information revolution to everyone.

45. The World Summit on the Information Society outcome documents set forth an extensive blueprint for implementation and follow-up at the international level, involving all stakeholders. They also provide for a comprehensive intergovernmental follow-up and review process, integrated in the wider review of the complex internationally agreed development goals, engaging the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, and the Commission on Science and Technology for Development.

46. While the Summit Outcome calls upon all actors — Governments, the private sector, civil society — to mobilize their full contribution to these processes, it relies on the United Nations system to play a leading role in relation to the 11 Action Lines that constitute key implementation mechanisms for achieving the goals of the World Summit on the Information Society.

47. In response to a request addressed in the Tunis agenda to the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of the CEB, the Board has now endorsed the establishment of a United Nations group on the information society to coordinate United Nations system activities within the implementation and follow-up framework of the World Summit on the Information Society. Led cooperatively by

ITU, UNESCO and UNDP, the group will work to mainstream the information society agenda into the activities and programmes of CEB members, avoid duplication, facilitate synergies between organizations to maximize joint efforts and promote public awareness. The group would act across multiple stakeholders as an information and coordination nexus for the inter-agency activities associated with both the implementation of the Action Lines and the follow-up processes in the Economic and Social Council and other bodies.

IV. Management in the United Nations system

Staff security and safety

48. Ensuring the safety and security of the United Nations system staff and reducing the vulnerability of its personnel deployed across the world, particularly those in conflict or highly insecure areas, remain key concerns of CEB.

49. A truly unified security management system encompassing all organizations of the United Nations system is a critical objective in this regard and its central funding would, in the view of CEB member organizations, be the most effective way of safeguarding its unity and its operational soundness. Meanwhile, in view of the decision of the General Assembly to maintain, for the time being, the existing arrangement with regard to cost-sharing for safety and security, CEB, through HLCM, has continued to monitor the apportionment of field-related security costs and has agreed to a more participatory and transparent procedure for the preparation of the budget, which is subject to cost-sharing. At the same time, HLCM continues to monitor and provide guidance to the Inter-Agency Security Management Network, the main inter-agency instrument, at the technical level, for addressing issues of safety and security of staff.

Enhancing governance and accountability

50. HLCM considered follow-up to the recommendation in the Summit Outcome for a review of governance and oversight mechanisms within the United Nations system. It agreed that inputs into the external study being conducted in response to the request of the Summit and overseen by the steering committee established by the Secretary-General would distinguish between issues of governance, which would cover only the United Nations and its funds and programmes, and auditing, investigation and related oversight functions, which would cover the United Nations specialized agencies as well. HLCM also established an ad hoc group to interact with the steering committee.

Enhancing financial resources management

51. Inter-agency collaboration in the financial and budgetary areas has continued through the Finance and Budget Network of HLCM. During the period under review, the Network addressed a number of important issues, including the single audit principle. In this context, HLCM agreed on the following policy statement (see CEB/2005/5, para. 41):

> "The United Nations Board of Auditors and the appointed External Auditors of the specialized agencies and of the International Atomic Energy Agency, retain the exclusive right to carry out external audits of the accounts and statements

of the United Nations Organizations. If special reviews are required, governing bodies should request the appointed External Auditor to carry out specific examinations and to issue separate reports to them on the results."

52. Also, on the recommendation of the Task Force on Accounting Standards, HLCM agreed in November 2005, that organizations of the system adopt International Public Sector Accounting Standards, effective no later than January 2010, as a common standard of accounting. At its spring 2006 session, CEB approved that support for this system-wide change be continued through the Task Force on Accounting Standards.

53. On the issue of support costs on extrabudgetary activities (and relationship between regular and extrabudgetary funding), a survey was launched by the Finance and Budget Network with a view to setting a common set of principles and practices related to the direct charging of execution and support for extrabudgetary funded projects, harmonizing policies and practices on support cost recovery and ensuring that extrabudgetary projects are not unduly subsidized by core resources. The organizations of the system have agreed that cost recovery policies should encompass both programme support costs and direct costs and that both these costs should be fully recovered from extrabudgetary projects.

Enhancing human resources management

54. In addressing human resources issues, CEB, HLCM and its Human Resources Network continued to engage in a dialogue with representatives of staff bodies (the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations and the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System) and the International Civil Service Commission. As provided for in the statute of the International Civil Service Commission, the Human Resources Network has continued to coordinate and represent the collective views of the United Nations system Executive Heads before the Commission on all relevant issues. The Human Resources Network has also focused on a number of important issues, such as the new mobility and hardship allowance; harmonization and simplification of entitlements; the renegotiation of the collective agreement with short-term interpreters; and the further harmonization of remuneration packages. Of particular note is the completion of the new inter-organization mobility accord, which came into effect in November 2005 and replaces the former 1949 Inter-Organization Agreement.

55. In addition, the inter-agency human resources task force on HIV/AIDS in the United Nations system workplace has focused on the harmonization and scaling up of the various United Nations HIV workplace initiatives into one common United Nations system-wide programme, "UN cares". It is aimed at ensuring universal access to an integrated package of prevention, care and support for all United Nations personnel and their families (regardless of contract status) in all duty stations, including headquarters.

Coordinating United Nations system response to the threat of avian influenza

56. CEB coordinated the United Nations system response to the threat of avian influenza and took the lead in the preparation of internal administrative guidelines for handling a pandemic situation. The guidelines, developed by the Human Resources Network for New York-based staff, were adopted as a general framework

for staff in the field and other headquarters locations. A summary of the administrative guidelines was incorporated into the overall United Nations system pandemic planning and preparedness guidelines, issued by the Office of the United Nations System Influenza Coordinator.

Inter-agency collaboration in information and communication technology

57. Information and communication technology plays a critical role in almost every operational and management aspect of the United Nations system (see also paras. 24 and 25 above on knowledge-sharing). In 2004, CEB adopted the United Nations system ICT strategic framework to strengthen system-wide coordination of this critical area. Inter-agency cooperation to implement the strategy in 2005 and 2006 has centred on its eight priority initiatives directed at enhancing system-wide knowledge-sharing, establishing sourcing models for ICT and creating more effective ICT governance and business case models. One of these initiatives, to create a system-wide interconnected network, would reduce duplication and allow for organizations to interact more easily, with advantages that include cost savings through shared communication and implementation capabilities, as well as shared technical expertise that one network across agencies would bring. In addition, in support of management reforms, the United Nations system is working to explore ways that agencies can share the costs associated with implementing enterprise resource planning software.

58. In another initiative, HLCM's directors have joined together to define and document a standard ICT investment governance framework based on industry best practice. This initiative provides a common measure for weighing organizational requirements against competing resources. These and other initiatives allow the ICT community to continue to move towards a more cohesive technological environment that is fully aligned with the operational and management goals of the entire system.

V. One United Nations system: the way forward

59. In *One United Nations*, the organizations of the system committed themselves to a more unified, purposeful United Nations system working towards shared goals in a common endeavour to maximize the impact of their support to Member States. The setting up of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence is timely. It dovetails with the system's own efforts and comes at a time of renewal and change within the system. The organizations of the system look forward to an outcome of the Panel's work that will make a significant contribution to advancing the coherence and effectiveness of the system's response to the multifaceted challenges confronting the international community.

Annex

Statement of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination on the multilateral round of negotiations under the Doha Development Agenda and the sixth World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference (Hong Kong, China, 13-18 December 2005)

We, the Executive Heads of the organizations of the United Nations system, reconfirm our support for the Doha Development Round, which has placed development at the heart of the multilateral trading system. We are resolved to work closely with the World Trade Organization to ensure the success of its forthcoming Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong, China, as a stepping stone towards the conclusion of the round in 2006.

International trade as an engine for economic growth is a key element in the complex development agenda. A successful and timely conclusion of the Doha negotiations, producing positive and balanced results and contributing towards a better insertion of developing and least developed countries in the world trading system, will help raise their living standards, reduce poverty and make a substantial contribution to meeting the goals for global development established by world leaders at the 2005 World Summit as well as at recent United Nations conferences.

The Doha Development Agenda negotiations should result in enhanced market access, in particular for goods and services of interest for developing countries, thus promoting diversification into new and dynamic sectors in goods and services; stimulating increased participation in global production and value chains; and generating employment. Furthermore, updating the trade rules will contribute to ensuring a more level playing field.

In a broader sense, a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system can substantially contribute to development worldwide, benefiting countries at all stages of development.

In order to achieve these goals, the forthcoming Ministerial Conference must result in significant progress, particularly in the crucial areas of the negotiations, so that the Round can be completed by the end of 2006. We appeal for political commitment from all participants to this end. Major developed countries must fully exercise their responsibilities and leadership role in order to bring about meaningful progress and trade-opening in areas of interest to developing countries, especially in agriculture, non-agricultural products and trade in services.

Meaningful "aid for trade" packages would go a long way in enabling developing countries, especially the least developed countries, to meet adjustment costs, build trade-related infrastructure and supply capacity in order to benefit from opportunities that would be opened up by the Doha Round. This is therefore an important complement to the World Trade Organization negotiations to which we also pledge our support.

In less than six weeks, ministers will gather in Hong Kong, China, in an effort to guide the Round towards its successful conclusion by the end of 2006. We urge all participating Governments to take the necessary political decisions so that consensus can be identified, gaps narrowed and forward momentum injected into the negotiating process.